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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 16 ANKARA 002478

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP, G, INL, DRL, EUR/PGI, EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TIP IN TURKEY: TURKISH MEDIA ATTENTION, April 1-15, 2006

1. In response to G/TIP inquiries, national and international media sources published the following articles about TIP in Turkey. Text of articles originally published in Turkish is provided through unofficial Embassy translation.

2. Published by Vatan on Monday, April 3:

TITLE: Mobile Wedding Camouflages Prostitution

BEGIN TEXT: It was determined that prostitution gangs in big cities such as Istanbul and Ankara were making women from the Eastern Bloc countries marry street children and thus avoid their deportation by obtaining Turkish citizenship for them. "Vatan" learned about these "fast" marriages and found the "husbands" who were convinced to marry in return for 100 YTL (about 80 USD). Thus, they shed light on the details of such marriages. It was determined that many of the street children over 18 were used for such marriages.

Cuneyt Yildiz from Dogubeyazit, Agri, too, is one of them. Yildiz got the offer from a friend doing on his eighth year on the streets in 2003. His friend asked, "You are marrying a foreign woman and they pay you 100 YTL. Are you interested?" He accepted the offer immediately without much thinking and he followed his friend to a gathering place in Dolapdere (Istanbul). There, a well-dressed man and three children whom he knew from the streets were waiting. They went to a photographer. After getting their pictures taken, they took a cab. They stopped in front of a textile plant in Caglayan. On the second floor of the plant, there were 150 very pretty women and some men who looked like they were Mafia members. There were a lot of substance addicts in rags as well. Cuneyt said, "For 100 YTL we would marry and get a divorce in three months. They also offered 2400 Euros. They asked us to pick a girl. I picked a blonde. I was feeling dizzy anyway. I wanted to take the money and leave immediately. Later somebody came. He was the marriage magistrate. We signed the book and left."

Other children, too, tell similar stories. Only the addresses where marriages took place and the provinces are different. For example, marriages that took place in Caglayan look as though they were in Batman, those in Gungoren in Adana, and those in Cevizlibag in Gemlik.

It is understood that marriage magistrates from other provinces come to Istanbul with their official marriage books, and, after performing these marriages, they go back to their towns. According to "Vatan" research, it was N.T. from the Batman Municipality and O.A. from the Gemlik Municipality who officiated such marriages in Batman, Bursa and Seyhan. It was also determined that these two people in the past forged marriages with foreign women and that they were under investigation.

Following his marriage, Cuneyt, with the support of Yusuf Kulca, President of the Children of Hope Foundation, received treatment and returned to his family. When he decided to marry, he remembered his fraudulent marriage. He immediately returned to Istanbul and went to the population registrant's office. He learned what he was afraid to hear: he was still married. According to the registration, he married in Batman and it was registered in that province's population registration. Now he is trying to get a divorce.

Emre Ture said, "We were in Dolmabahce in 2003 and we were high. A friend named Feristah came and said, 'You could marry a foreign woman for three months and you get paid both while marrying and while getting a divorce. Are you interested?' I agreed. Other friends, too, agreed. After we got our pictures taken, we got married at the Tercuman houses in Cevizlibag." END TEXT.

3. Published by Sabah on Wednesday, April 5:

TITLE: We were kept in the same room with Natashas

BEGIN TEXT: Didem Aksu, who was detained during the prostitution operation, told us what she went through. She said, "I knew these people who were presented as prostitution barons as managers of artists. They bargained

with businessmen without notifying us. We were detained when my name and Ece Gursel's name were mentioned during phone conversations. Just like Ece, they said I could file a court case against these people. The police set Gursel free, but they sent the rest of us to the venereal disease hospital. There we were kept in the same room with Natashas. It was not fair." END TEXT.

14. Published by Sabah on Wednesday, April 5:

TITLE: Models released, soccer players testified

BEGIN TEXT: Following the testimony of 22 models, soccer players, too, testified. The soccer players came to the police department late in the evening to avoid the media.

The 22 models who were detained during the Vice Squad's Barbie Operation were released after completing the necessary paperwork. Following their testimony, several soccer players were invited in. They arrived late in order not to be caught by journalists. Meanwhile, the interrogation of four people who were allegedly involved in prostitution, including one woman, continued.

Nine people, including Sinem Umas, a participant of the TV program, "Will you be my bride?" and Hulya Yamanoglu from "Somebody is watching us," and singer Fulden Uras, were taken to the venereal disease hospital to get a medical check-up at 19:00 hrs the other evening. The second group was taken to the hospital the same night around 01:30 hrs. The last group was taken during the morning hours yesterday. Models, including Hulya Yamanoglu, answered questions as they were taken to the hospital. Yamanoglu did not accept the allegations and said, "A friend's phone book had many numbers and that was why I was invited to give my testimony."

Muge Uras, mother of Fulden Uras, who was taken to the hospital, said, "They let Ece Gursel go and detained my daughter. They are taking her to this hospital as if she has committed a very bad crime."

Dincer D. has connections with Ejder T., who was arrested in connection with a raid called Operation Cat one and a half months ago. Dincer D. was detained for marketing women. After Dincer D., police also reached women traffickers Bulent T., Suat Y. and Aysel T. END TEXT.

15. Published by Sabah on Wednesday, April 5:

TITLE: What do jurists say?

BEGIN TEXT: Detention of models for alleged prostitution brought an old controversy back on the agenda. Jurists commented on the question of whether a man who pays for prostitution and a woman who is involved in prostitution would get punished. Only encouraging and mediating for prostitution is a crime.

Associate Professor Adem Sozuer, Faculty of Law, Istanbul University: "According to the penal code, only mediating and encouraging prostitution is a crime. It is out of the question to punish a person who prostitutes for money. The law foresees treatment for such people and no punishment. The same thing is true for men who are involved in prostitution in return for money."

Associate Professor Umit Kocasakal, Faculty of Law, Galatasaray University: "According to the law, not the prostitution, but encouraging people into prostitution is a crime. So there is no punishment for men and women who are involved in prostitution in return for money. I believe those who were detained were taken into custody for other reasons. There are certain procedures concerning venereal diseases. Nothing else. One needs to know the details of the incident."

Professor Bahri Ozturk, Faculty of Law: "Being involved in prostitution is not a crime according to the penal code. In other words, there is no punishment for men and women who are involved in prostitution. Encouraging and mediating for prostitution is a crime. Clients are not prosecuted. If the detained women were involved only in prostitution, then they should not be subject to any legal action." END TEXT.

16. Reported by Hurriyet on Thursday, April 6:

TITLE: Those detained in the Barbie Operation can sue officials

BEGIN TEXT: The Barbie Operation, which was conducted as a result of the testimony of suspects detained in a drug raid and after phone tapping, led to controversy. Famous singers and models claimed that the police exposed them without any evidence and expressed their distress. Jurists argued that the treatment of the women was against domestic and international law. They said that those who were detained had the right to file punitive damage claims. Attorney Ufuk

Erkunt told Hurriyet, "Turkey has signed international agreements on prostitution. The Paris Agreement, the 1933 Geneva Act on trafficking in persons, the 1949 Human Trafficking Convention. According to all these agreements, the principle is to prevent the crime and not to accuse the women."

"According to Article 227, women are victims. According to the law, they should not be punished, but treated. These provisions do not require punishment for those who are involved in prostitution, but to enjoy security measures. Those who are responsible are the ones who mediated and those who earned a benefit are the mediators."

"Articles 90 and 91 of the Criminal Procedures Law list one by one the conditions for detention. But if the women were not responsible for the crime and if they are witnesses, they should not have been detained. It is not legal to take them from their homes in the morning. They can only be invited to give their testimony, not as a suspect."

Exposing women on TV and the way the incident was reflected in the media were violations of their individual rights, which should be under constitutional guarantee. It is not in the regulations to take them to the venereal disease hospital. Each of them can file a punitive damages case for the violation of their individual rights." END TEXT.

17. An op-ed by Ufuk Koroglu, published by Zaman on Thursday, April 6:

TITLE: Some model agencies are like prostitution centers

BEGIN TEXT: When famous models, singers and actresses of the show world were detained and interrogated as part of a prostitution operation, people began to focus on the dark points of the night life.

The police officials determined that drugs and prostitution were an indispensable part of the night life. A police official said, "Drugs and prostitution go hand-in-hand. Some of those involved have certain abilities; others are pretty, and still others have some unique physical characteristics. They are encouraged by people around them to appear on TV and thus become famous. In the prostitution sector, the more famous you are, the higher your price goes. Money earned from prostitution is used for drugs."

He added that celebrities regard drugs as an element to increase performance. Friends, too, play an important part. "Those that they have around are people who are already involved in criminal acts. Whenever they want, they get this substance from those friends," he noted.

Another police official noted that there were many model agencies in Istanbul which actually operate as prostitution centers. He said, "Young people who go to an agency to become a model are dragged into prostitution. Girls and boys are deliberately put in the same rooms to sleep together. Youngsters who apply to these places to become a model are being dragged into prostitution." Another police official added, "They first make drug addicts of girls who want to become famous drug addicts. Thus, they earn money both from drugs and prostitution. They encourage those who have talent to appear on TV programs and become known by the public. The more famous a person is, the more his/her price goes up. Money raised from prostitution goes to drugs. When police capture them, they get very irritated. They listen to others who say that media attention, whether good or bad, is a good thing."

During the prostitution raid by the Public Order Department of the Istanbul Police, famous celebrities were detained. Twenty women, including, singer Fulden Uras, model and singer Berna Arici, her sister Esra Arici, model Gulden Kosavali, Aylin Poyraz, Sinem Umas from the TV program, "We are Getting Married," Hulya Yamanoglu from the TV program "Somebody is watching us," Didem Aksu and presenter Ozlem Ertem were interrogated for being together with men in return for money. Meanwhile, during a drug operation last week by the Narcotics Police, singer Fatih Urek and belly dancer Leyla Adali were taken to the police department to testify on whether they were using cocaine.

Police conducted operations against the entertainment world not only last week, but earlier. Celebrities such as singers Yildiz Tilbe and Atilla Tas, models Ebru Salli, Sevda Demirel, Sinem Uretmen, belly dancers Sibel Gokce and Leyla Adali were detained a couple of times for using drugs.

Istanbul Police Chief Celalettin Cerrah said that some of the women who were detained by the Vice Squad during the Barbie Operation cried on TV programs and tried to deceive the citizens. He said that one should wait a little bit more before making such programs and added, "It will be useful to wait for the judicial process." He answered

questions by journalists during his press conference yesterday. Upon a question, "Women who were involved in this are appearing on some programs and trying to deceive the public by crying. I wish those programs had waited a bit longer. It will be useful to wait for the judicial process. Our public will decide later. Whether police acted partially or did we act when some people were involved in certain things?"

When asked about the names of some soccer players who were mentioned in connection with the operation, Cerrah said, "If there were soccer players involved, I do not want to give away their names at this stage. It is out of the question for them to be taken to a hospital for a medical check up." END TEXT.

18. Published by The Anatolian Times on Friday, April 7:

TITLE: Tuzmen Meets Aegean Minister Pavlidis in Athens

BEGIN TEXT: Turkish State Minister Kursad Tuzmen met Greek Minister of Aegean and Island Politics Aristotelis Pavlidis in Athens today. Speaking to reporters after his meeting with Pavlidis, Tuzmen stressed that his meeting was extremely warm and created an atmosphere of cooperation.

"We talked on the development of trade between cities on the Aegean coast and Greek islands. We focused on how we can send fresh vegetables and fruits to the islands," said Tuzmen.

Minister Tuzmen noted that delays caused by laboratory tests and the issuance of certificates make the trade of fresh vegetables and fruits difficult.

"We have invited a Greek delegation of observers who can help in overcoming the delays in the food sector. Trade between Turkey and Greece has tripled in the past three years. If we can share the same sea, we can also share the global market," expressed Tuzmen.

Tuzmen commented that he will visit Aegean islands with a delegation of businessmen in October.

"I believe in the future of Greece. My Greek counterpart Pavlidis believes in the future of Turkey," stated Tuzmen.

According to Pavlidis, Tuzmen and he talked about various issues, including daily excursions to the Greek islands from Turkey and human trafficking from Turkey to Greek islands.

Tuzmen will return to Turkey after attending a lunch hosted by Turkish-Greek Business Council Greece Co-chair Panayotis Kucikos. END TEXT.

19. Published by Vatan on Saturday, April 8:

TITLE: Hulya Yamanoglu, mother of two, who was exposed in the "Barbie Operation" said, "My daughter does not talk to me and my three-month relationship has ended."

BEGIN TEXT: Q: You were detained during the Istanbul police's "Barbie Operation" with the allegation you were practicing prostitution. What happened?

A: I woke up at 8:00 a.m. on Monday morning when the door bell rang. I thought that it was the wrong door and looked out through the peephole. There were three people who identified themselves as the police. My son is doing his military service and as I opened the door the first thing that I thought of was that something had happened to him. They said, "Take your phone with you. We will go to the police station. We cannot say anything more. We will tell you everything there." They also asked whether my cell phone was registered in my name. When I heard this, I thought that it might be an incident over a stolen phone.

Q: What happened at the police station? Were you upset that you were exposed?

A: We first went to the Sisli Etfal Hospital to confirm that there was no use of force. They said that we would come back after going to the Gayrettepe Police Department. When we arrived at the station, an army of journalists were waiting at the gate. People tried to cover their faces. I did not feel the inclination to do so, since I had no idea and I did not feel guilty for anything. The journalists told me that I would be taken to the Vice Squad.

Q: It was reported that 23 people were detained. Is this figure right? Do you know the others?

A: I did not count them one by one, but this is the figure I know. Most of my information is from the media or from the clubs that I go to get clients. They took us to the detention center by telling us, "There will be an announcement, but first let us go downstairs where you will be more comfortable and where you can have tea or coffee."

Q: Have you ever been in a jail before?

A: This was the first time ever. I had never experienced or seen any such place except for in the movies.

Q: How did they treat you at the police department? What did you go through?

A: We generally get scared when we hear about the police or a jail, but this was not the case at all. They treated us very nicely. They kept coming to check on whether we needed anything. Then came the announcement: "You know some people. Dincer D., Bulent T., Suat Y., and a very fat woman named 'Deaf Aysel,' whom I had never met before. They are involved in human trafficking. In the past, you had phone conversations with them. You will testify." These people were under surveillance for eight months and their phones were tapped. They said, "Let nobody deny this since we have the phone records." Each of us testified. The interrogation ended at 03:30 hrs. (the next day). During the interrogation, they said, "You are not criminals. You are here only to testify. We already apprehended those who are responsible. Why do these people have your phone numbers? How close are you to them? Were you hurt? Do you want to file an official complaint? We want to know this."

Q: Did they want you to file an official complaint?

A: The more people who file complaints, the more apparent the crimes will be. The police thanked me for being open. When I said that I would not file a complaint, they said, "You hurt us. We expected you to file such a complaint." This was such a big blow to me.

Q: Was there anyone who admitted that she was involved in prostitution through these people?

A: There were some people within that group. There were those who admitted that this is what happened. I heard from them later that such things were done in return for \$300-500 or \$1000-2000.

Q: How did you meet the men who allegedly were involved in trafficking in women?

A: I knew the three names mentioned, except for Aysel T. There are some night clubs, particularly in Taksim, that I visit. They were among the groups that I met there and said "hello" to each other.

Q: How did they find your phone number?

A: I am the management director of a place. I give everyone my business card. Each person I meet is a potential client.

Q: How did the most recent incident affect you?

A: I was on the verge of quitting since I could not manage to get enough clients to go to the place. When this incident happened, my boss did not call me. My daughter does not speak to me. She is doing this, not because she does not believe in me, but because she does not know how to explain this to others. I lost my three-month affair. My mother cried a lot and I am afraid something may happen to her since she has high blood pressure.

Q: You are living in a luxurious apartment in Etiler.

A: Currently I cannot pay my bills. I have been living in this house for seven years. The normal rent for my place begins at 1,300 YTL (a little under \$1,000). Since I am a long-term tenant, my rent is half that price. My landlord is very nice. I now am in a position not to be able to give pocket money to my daughter and not to be able to send any money to my son. I even am in debt to the grocer.

Q: Did you talk to Suat Y. frequently?

A: He called every now and again, but not more than five times total. He came over to my house once to have coffee. I went to his place as well. He lives in Ulus. He was very hospitable.

Q: Did you learn that Suat Y. was a pimp when you were detained?

A: One day we met again at the club. Somebody at my table said, "Where did you meet this man? Do you not know what his profession is? He is a pimp. Do not be very close to him." I responded, "He does not look like one. Are you sure?" I suffered a lot because of prejudices stemming from the Big Brother House. He later called me one more time and offered to introduce me to some people. When I refused, he said, "I have a very good friend. May I give him your phone number? Can he call you as a friend?" Since I did not see

any harm, I said he could.

Q: Was he Dincer D.?

A: Dincer D. called me a week later. He said that there were a lot of people at the night club who wondered whether I would be involved in such a thing and since I exchanged pleasantries with them, those people told him that they had a crush on me. He told me that although I was not involved in such a thing, would I consider being involved.

Q: Did you not show any reaction to these people since you were afraid of them?

A: I was not afraid at all, but after Dincer D.'s phone call, I felt uneasy. I called Suat Y. and told him that this was not the type of conversation I would have and that even if I were starving, I would not do such a thing. I asked him to tell that to Dincer D. They never called me again. Months later, we bumped into each other a few times. We only exchanged greetings.

Q: What do Suat Y. and Dincer D. look like?

A: Suat is 28 years old. He is good looking. He has a clean face. Looks like a model. Dincer D. is a man who laughs a lot. He has bright eyes. I believe he must be around 30.

Q: Are these people working as an organization?

A: I have had meetings with Suat Y. and Dincer D. It was around eight months ago. I was unemployed and in a difficult situation. First Suat Y. called me. After asking how I was, he said, "Hulya, you are a pretty woman. I have some people around me. We like you. We know that you are having hard times. Are you interested in meeting these men?" Since he was a very decent person who spoke politely, I kindly said, "Thank you. How thoughtful of you." He said, "I checked. Everybody says that Hulya does not do this for money. She wants love. That is why she is having a hard time. She is stupid." He also asked whether there was anybody in my life. When I said there was not, he suggested introducing me to some people who would relieve me financially. I told him, "It is not in my spirit. I am a very natural woman. If I was going to do it, I would have done it when I was younger. I have two children. One of them is in the military."

Q: Why did you talk for such a long time to a person who made such an indecent proposal?

A: We were not close at all. But since he was very polite, I could not respond impolitely. I did not know then that he was doing this type of work.

Q: Did you not find the proposal strange?

A: No. He watched me on the Big Brother House. He thought that I was a very sweet woman who suffered a lot and wondered why I was not happy. I did not feel suspicious at all. He was talking to me in a friendly fashion. END TEXT.

10. Reported by the Turkish Daily News on Sunday, April 9:

TITLE: UN in charge of creating "Women First Cities" in Turkey

BEGIN TEXT: "Through this program, we aim at improving political and budgetary commitment and at increasing the ability of local government and NGOs to promote and protect women and girls' rights and raise local awareness about women and girls' rights," say UN Joint Program Manager Senol.

Can a democratic country afford to be gender blind? Does Turkey, a country moving ahead toward becoming a member of the European Union for the democratic future of its own people, have the luxury of being gender blind?

Replying "no" in response to the questions above, resources from the United Nations, bilateral donors and the private sector and partners with the Interior Ministry have been combined through a joint UN program designed in line with the principle that involving women and men in decision-making processes is a sine qua non in a democratic society.

Last month, the day before marking the March 8 International Women's Day in the Turkish capital, the historical Ankara Palace hosted a ceremony for the launching of the program. The two-year UN Joint Gender Program was publicly launched by Kemal Dervis, the Turkish head of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in front of 300 members of Parliament, mayors, senior government officials, nongovernmental organizations, ambassadors, UN staff and representatives of the press.



Nearly one month has passed since the launch of the program. UN Joint Program Manager Nevin Senol, during an interview with the Turkish Daily News, sounded hopeful and determined about the program that is currently ongoing in six different cities - Izmir, Kars, Van, Sanliurfa, Nevsehir and Trabzon - in order to promote and protect women and girls' human rights through activities.

"Through this program, we aim at improving political and budgetary commitment and at increasing the ability of local government and NGOs to promote and protect women and girls' rights and raise local awareness about women and girls' rights," Senol said.

In brief, what the program is trying to realize is simultaneously increasing local ability while also changing the deeply rooted male-centered stance among local administrations.

The joint program is supported by the UN agencies and international organizations that have offices in Turkey: UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR, WHO, FAO, IOM and UNFPA.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Turkey office, where Senol is currently working, is also the executive agency of the program.

Turkey must obviously strive for equality and the representation of women and men in decision-making processes and take the opportunities to achieve both these goals. It has overhauled its civil and penal codes to increase the rights of women and children. It has recognized rape in marriage and sexual harassment as crimes and has included tougher measures against rape, pedophilia, human trafficking and torture.

The country is, however, struggling to stem the practice of "honor killings" - the killing of girls or women by relatives for allegedly disgracing the family. Women's groups say domestic violence levels are high.

Police figures released earlier this year showed that close to 2,000 people had been killed in Turkey in the past six years as victims of honor killings or blood feuds.

A thorny path towards "deep change of mentality":

Only a day before the UN joint program was launched, a senior EU official praised legal reforms that have been carried out in Turkey to improve the rights of women, however, warned at the same time that Turkey also needed a "change of mentality" regarding the general approach towards women.

Vladimir Spidla, the EU commissioner for employment, social affairs and equal opportunity, was speaking at a press conference in Ankara, where he arrived over the weekend to support women ahead of the March 8 International Women's Day. Last year, Turkish police severely beat women demonstrators during a protest march organized to mark the day, sparking condemnation from the EU.

"Of course Turkey has made huge progress, but there is a need for a deep change of mentality," toward women, Spidla said.

"The issue of equal opportunity is an essential component in your country's preparations for future EU accession. The timing of my visit also reflects the importance that the European Commission attaches to this issue, as a date close to International Women's Day was deliberately chosen," Spidla said at a seminar ahead of the press conference.

The UN Joint Gender Program that is being implemented by the United Nations, the Ministry of the Interior and the Association for Training and Supporting Women Candidates (KA-DER) will hopefully carry out the "deep change of mentality" that was appropriately addressed by Spidla.

Senol explained that the six cities involved in the program were chosen according to municipal interest and ability to participate in the program and perceived needs as expressed in preliminary city visits. These cities were selected to demonstrate how participatory and coordinated cross-sectoral approaches can improve services, augment resource availability and improve the lives of girls and women in a variety of settings.

Priority actions are being identified through a participatory planning process involving all stakeholders. These priority areas are being drawn from the following: education, employment, reproductive health, violence against women, trafficking, asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced people.

"Once identified, stakeholders will work together to design five-year local action plans," Senol said.

The program will also support the start-up of local action plan implementation. By the end of the program a financial national scaling-up model will be in place and the six cities will be evaluated for certification as "Women First Cities" based on commonly agreed-upon criteria. END TEXT.

11. Reported by Hurriyet on Monday, April 10:

TITLE: They cut the throat of the girl who ran away from home

BEGIN TEXT: The body found in the woods around Sivritepe on the Datca Highway was that of Done Bicer (17), who ran away from her home in Ortaca 15 days ago.

It was determined that she was forced into prostitution and when she objected, she was stabbed seven times in the chest. Her throat was cut as well.

In connection with the incident, women named M.Y. (30), Y.O. (20) and C.O. (25) were detained in the Beldibi district and they were sent to the judicial hall on manslaughter and forcing a minor into prostitution charges. END TEXT.

12. Reported by Zaman on Monday, April 10:

TITLE: Girl slain by prostitution gang

BEGIN TEXT: The body found next to the Marmara-Datca Highway belonged to Done Bicer (17), who had run away from home 15 days ago. In connection with the incident, three people, including one woman, were captured. Bicer's family had notified the police of her disappearance.

Bicer went to Marmaris and met with M.Y. (30), Y.O. (25), and his sister C.O. (20), who forced her into prostitution. After being with some men, Bicer refused to be involved in prostitution and argued. Those individuals reportedly killed Bicer since she might have tipped off security forces. The three reportedly confessed their crime and after would be sent to the court after interrogation. END TEXT.

13. Reported by Radikal on Wednesday, April 12:

TITLE: Models Victimized

BEGIN TEXT: In the indictment, the women who were taken from their homes and exposed as they came to the police department during the prostitution operation code-named "Barbie," were mentioned as victims.

A total of up to 64 years' imprisonment was demanded for four people who forced them into prostitution.

Twenty-three women, who were detained during a police operation last week and among whom were some famous people, tried to hide their faces as they were taken out of the police car.

When the exposure of the women at the police station was criticized, Istanbul provincial police chief Celalettin Cerrah responded saying, "The police will not expose honorable people."

The women said that they would sue the Interior Ministry and those who gave out their names. END TEXT.

14. Reported by Sabah and Hurriyet on Wednesday, April 12:

TITLE: Disclosed names are victims in the case

BEGIN TEXT: In the indictment prepared by the Istanbul Public Chief Prosecutor, it was stated that the phones of Dincer Dincsoy, Suat Yildiz and Bulent Tetik were tapped by the police from July 29, 2005 to February 24, 2006. It was noted that the suspects used their cell phones for the victims and served as mediator and bargained for them to be involved in prostitution in return for money.

It was also stated that the suspects made some of the victims use their own houses for prostitution, in return for living expenses. The suspects will be tried on charges of encouraging and mediating prostitution and for providing locations for this purpose. Imprisonment from 32 to 64 years was demanded for Dincer Dincsoy, from 14 to 28 years for Bulent Tetik and 24 to 48 years for Suat Yildiz. Aysel Erentok, the suspect who was released pending trial, will face 2 to 4 years' imprisonment.

The victims are: (A list of 22 names of victims given).



In the indictment, the names of the following soccer players were mentioned as witnesses: (5 soccer players' names were given).

Other witnesses were: (7 names given).

Taped conversations.

July 23, 2005, 23:29 hours: A soccer player asked the pimp to send him a woman. He proposed a name, but the soccer player said that he liked other women. The same day he called another woman on her cell phone. He asked whether she could go. She said that right at that time she was going to Reina (expensive and exclusive Istanbul nightclub) and that she could go later.

July 30, 2005, 15:47 hours: The soccer player asked him to send him one of the women that he always sees. The pimp called a woman and told her that the soccer player was waiting for her. She accepted. She asked for the apartment number of the soccer player. She was told that the soccer player would send \$300 by two people after the business was concluded.

August 12, 2005, 07:00 hours: The soccer player said that he would be in Turkey at 06:00 hours the next day and asked for the girl "from Germany" to be kept ready.

September 13, 2005, 00:11 hours: The pimp sent a message to the soccer player and notified him that he would give \$400 to the girl and \$100 to him and added, "You would love this baby."

August 1, 2005, 00:21 hours: A woman who called the pimp asked for a girl for two hours and offered \$300. At 00:34 hours the girl, "X," called the pimp and listed her hesitations for entering into a lesbian relationship. She asked the pimp to explain to the client that she might be acting too enthusiastic/willing for this reason.

August 8, 2005, 15:55 hours: The pimp called a woman and notified her that the 30th richest man in India would be in Turkey on Wednesday and that he gave the names of two women. The woman said that the man gave a lot of money and that she could also take a third person.

Experts: Police acted unlawfully

Jurists bitterly criticized the police operation. Despite announcements by the police, names of the women were mentioned as victims in the indictment.

Kazim Kolcuoglu, President of the Istanbul Bar Association: According to laws, prostitution is not a crime, but mediating for prostitution is. For capturing mediators, there should be victims involved. There must be people who are used. The way these women were detained was very wrong according to the new penal code. It was against the constitution and the Human Rights Convention as well. Since it involves an investigation, you cannot detain them. Now they show them as victims. How can this happen? While preparing the document, the police spoke with slang and not with the words of the law. All of those women should sue (the police).

Yucel Sayman, Former President of the Istanbul Bar Association: Police always behave like this. They interpret the law for themselves. It is not correct legally speaking. It was also seen as an effort to intimidate these people. If they sue them for compensation for interfering into their private lives, they would win. It is unlawful for them to be forced into the venereal disease hospital.  
END TEXT.

15. Reported by Aksam on Wednesday, April 12:

TITLE: First exposed, then called a victim

BEGIN TEXT: In the indictment of the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor, it was stated that the phones of Dincer D., Suat Y., and Bulent T. were tapped from July 29, 2005 to February 24, 2006.

As a result of tapping, it was determined that they encouraged victims to be involved in prostitution, in return for money, and that they provided mediation and the medium for prostitution.

According to the indictment, these three suspects were bargaining and mediating for the victims to be involved in prostitution with men. They brought some of the victims together with men and allowed their houses to be used for their meetings. The suspects took some of the money that the victims received for prostitution. Aysel E. also mediated for prostitution.

Up to four years imprisonment was demanded for the four suspects. It was also requested that Dincer D. be punished separately for 16 victims, Suat Y. for 12 victims, and Bulent T. for seven victims. Ayse E. would also be punished based on the same article.

In the indictment, the 23 models and singers who allegedly were involved in prostitution, based on Article 223, were referred to as victims.

Article 223 of the Turkish Penal Code considers women who are forced into prostitution as victims. END TEXT.

16. Op-ed piece written by Balcicek Pamir and published in Sabah on Wednesday, April 12:

TITLE: If a victim, what kind of treatment is this?

BEGIN TEXT: What did the Istanbul Police Chief say? "Our police definitely would not like to expose honorable/honest people."

I mean the . . . operation conducted by the Vice Squad. Remember the women detained for having sex with famous people? I can not spell out the name of the operation because the company (Barbie) objected. They certainly are right. The little girls' dolls are mentioned along with prostitution. Can you believe it?

Let us talk about Celallettin Cerrah's reference to "honorable/honest people." He already reached a conviction. He decided on who is a criminal and who is honest. He also added, "It is very useful to wait for the judicial process." Cerrah can wait for the result. Yesterday there was another development and 144 years were demanded for the suspects in the operation. Everyone might have thought that Cerrah was right. But do not. Only four people were detained during that operation. Charges of encouraging and mediating for prostitution, and providing venues for these acts were filed. Imprisonment from 72 to 144 years was demanded. What about the women?

Those models, TV stars and presenters. Hold on to your seats. The 23 women whose names were mentioned in the operation were considered as victims. Even when the police claimed that they were dishonorable/dishonest!

Is there prostitution? How deep were these women involved? I do not know. I am curious about something else.

If you are going to call all these women victims, why did you project the image that they were prostitutes? Were they victims or prostitutes?

The four suspects carried out the bargaining in the name of the victims. They mediated for the prostitution of the victims. Some of them even allowed the use of their houses. Did they receive money in return? Certainly.

Let us look at the other victims. A few soccer players, a former minister, a former president of a sports club. What did they do? They got to meet these women through those four people who are on trial and facing 144 years in jail. They bargained and they have been with these women. That is not what I am saying. This is the allegation. Neither their names, nor their pictures were disclosed. Nobody sent them to a hospital for a medical check-up. They spent the night at home with their wives. Some of them might have taken their wives to Paper Moon for dinner. It is in fashion now, you know. Be disloyal to your wife and take her out to dinner in the evening.

What did the police chief say? "I do not want to disclose the names of the soccer players at this stage." Why? Are those the real victims? END TEXT.

17. Reported by Vatan on Wednesday, April 12:

TITLE: Officially victims

BEGIN TEXT: In the very controversial Barbie Operation's indictment, prepared by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor, the names of 23 women including celebrities such as Fulden Uras, Sinem Umas and Hulya Yamanoglu were mentioned as victims. The indictment stated that the phones of Dincer Dincsoy, Suat Yildiz and Bulent Tetik were tapped from July 29, 2005 to February 24, 2006, by Istanbul police teams. It was stated that the suspects, on various occasions through their cell phones, mediated and bargained for the victims to be involved in prostitution in return for money. The suspects allowed some of the victims to use their homes for prostitution and in return received some money.

Charges were filed based on the second paragraph of Article 227 of the Turkish Penal Code. Each suspect's punishment for mediating, encouraging prostitution, and providing the

venue would be multiplied by the number of victims involved.

Thus, Dincer Dincsoy will face 32-64 years, Bulent Tetik from 14-28 years, and Suat Yildiz from 24-48 years. Aysel Erentok faces 2-4 years. The second paragraph of Article 227 foresees two to four years' imprisonment for those who mediate, encourage prostitution and for providing the location/venue for this purpose.

The indictment referred to the phone conversations of witnesses such as Sergen Yalcin, Hasan Sas and Ece Gursel.

Soccer player Sergen Yalcin and suspect Dincer Dincsoy talked on November 9, 2005, at 01:53 hrs:

D: She will be there in 10 minutes.

S: Polat Tower 144. The woman knows me, no?

D: No, she came from Izmir.

S: Is she pretty?

D: She is.

S: Brunette or blonde?

D: Brunette, brunette.

S: O.K.

Dincer Dincsoy spoke to Didem Aksoy on November 28, 2005, at 15:16 hrs:

D: Where are you?

A: I am in Ulus.

D: Can you get ready?

A: Sure.

D: I will send you across (the Bosphorus). You will get \$700, including \$300 for me. You will stay for one hour.

A: O.K.

D: He wants a plump woman. You are like that, right?

A: Yes.

D: Then get ready immediately because the man said that he was very tired. He will go home shortly. Look very pretty.

Suspect Bulent talked to a man named Mahmut on January 26, 2006:

B: Hello.

M: Hello Bulent bey, I'm Mahmut. What did you do?

B: I talked to Berna hanım. She will charge \$1000 and it will be at her home.

M: O.K.

B: The other lady, Neriman hanım, will be for \$500 again at her home.

M: O.K. What is the situation like with the other models?

B: Go to the internet. Some charge \$3000-4000. Ece Gursel charges \$10,000.

Dincer Dincsoy speaks to Fulden Aras on October 4, 2005, at 00:45 hrs:

F: Dear.

D: Now he is giving me his room number. We will be there around 02:00 hrs. Can you pick me up around a quarter to 2:00 from my house? It is possible?

F: I can. Who is he?

D: A girlfriend introduced him to me. He is magnificent. I got \$1500. I will give you \$1000 and keep \$500. You will appreciate this one.

F: O.K. baby. END TEXT.

18. Published by Milliyet on Wednesday, April 12:

TITLE: Twenty-three women "victims"

BEGIN TEXT: The investigation on the prostitution operation by the Istanbul Police Morals Department has been completed. Charges were filed against four suspects, including one woman, for involving 23 women, including models and singers, in prostitution. Imprisonment of up to 68 years was demanded for the suspects who were charged with mediating and encouraging and finding the venue for prostitution.

The indictment, prepared by Istanbul Prosecutor Ali Celebi, demanded that arrested suspects Dincer Dincsoy, Suat Yildiz and Bulent Tetik and the currently free suspect, Aysel Erentok, be tried for encouraging, mediating and finding the venue for prostitution. The 23 women, detained during the operation, were mentioned in the indictment as victims.

The indictment stated that suspect Dincsoy mediated through cell phones for 16 victims, Yildiz for 12 and Tetik for seven. It was stated, "The suspects took the victims themselves to the locations that they would meet with clients, allowed some victims to use their houses for such meetings, took part of the money the victims got from their clients and earned their living through this business."

The indictment also stated that suspect Erentok, who mediated for prostitution in return for money, called Bulent Tetik various times and requested a famous woman for a client. It went on, "During a search in Tetik's house, he was found with victims A.T. and A.V.A in the bedroom. Nine

sheets of paper with names and telephone numbers were found in the house. Sixteen photographs and two cell phones used to carry out this crime were found in the house. In the house of Suat Yildiz, 51 photographs, 650 YTL and \$200 earned from this crime, as well as two videos and two cell phones were found. Victim B.E. was found in his home.

Since the law states that suspects should be punished for each victim, the relevant article of the penal code will be applied 16 times for Dincsoy, seven times for Tetik and 12 times for Yildiz. It will be used only once for Erentok. The indictment also referred to 12 people, including soccer players, as witnesses.

Commenting on the reaction to the exposure of the women during the operation, Istanbul Police Chief Celalettin Cerrah said, "Our police will not expose honorable/honest people. The judicial process will show who has been doing what." END TEXT.

19. Reported by Milliyet on Thursday, April 13:

BEGIN TEXT: New York Times Reported and the "Cat" Pulled Down the Gang

BEGIN TEXT: The investigation of 16 suspects, nine of whom were arrested, has been completed. They were detained last month during the most comprehensive prostitution operation of recent years, called "Cat."

The indictment, prepared by the Istanbul Public Prosecutor, noted that the police got the tip from the New York Times article entitled, "Is Turkey Happy to be a Market for Women?" and dated June 2005. The article was quoted by Turkey's national media. The indictment demanded up to 575 years imprisonment for Ejder Toprak, the gang leader who was accused of establishing a gang, being a member of a gang, confining people, sexual attack on a person, prostitution, looting and forgery.

The indictment also noted that Toprak established an organization and "(Along with) Other people, primarily Ejder Toprak's wife Oksana Toprak, were bringing women by plane from Russia, Moldova, Belarus and the Ukraine by deceiving them. These women were met at the airport by 'secretaries' who were earlier dragged into prostitution by the gang. They were taken to hotels and houses that belonged to the gang."

The indictment noted that these women were either forced or voluntarily got involved in prostitution. They were also forced to sign promissory notes. It went on, "Women are being rented by the hour or by the night for approximately \$100-200. The amount that each woman is supposed to get is registered in a log and the money was given to Ejder Toprak." END TEXT.

20. Published by Radikal on Thursday, April 13:

TITLE: Demand for 575 years for prostitution

BEGIN TEXT: A total of up to 575 years' imprisonment was demanded for seven separate crimes allegedly committed by Ejder Toprak, the gang leader who deceives Russian, Moldovan and Ukrainian women with promises of jobs and then forces them into prostitution.

The Istanbul Public Prosecutor completed his indictment on the Cat Operation that had ties to Mersin and Izmir.

The indictment, taking into consideration the number of victims, demanded up to 575 years' imprisonment for forcing the women to stay, rape, prostitution, looting, and having an unregistered gun.

For the remaining 16 suspects, he demanded imprisonment of from 3 to 216 years. END TEXT.

21. Published by Sabah on Thursday, April 13:

TITLE: Raid conducted when "Times" reported

BEGIN TEXT: The Cat Operation was conducted in Istanbul following Craig Smith's article in the New York Times entitled, "Is Turkey Happy to Be a Market for Women?" When the article appeared in the national press on June 28, 2005, the police conducted the biggest prostitution operation of recent years.

In the article, it was stated that the market for women, which emerged in Turkey following the collapse of the USSR, has turned into a slave trade.

Following a long surveillance, the police conducted a raid on February 20, 2006, during which 16 people were captured.

Ejder Toprak, the alleged leader of the gang, was also arrested and put into jail. It was alleged that gang members and primarily Toprak's wife, Oksana, deceived women from Russia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine with various promises and by paying their travel expenses to Istanbul. These women were met at the airport by "secretaries" who had been dragged into prostitution themselves. They were taken to the houses of the gang or to hotels. There, these women were made to sign promissory notes. They were then forced into prostitution. The gang members provided the locations for prostitution. They sold those who opposed and created a security risk to the others.

These women were sold for \$100-200 for the hour or for the night, and they were taken to the client by the gang's drivers. There was a log for all the money that these women had to earn and later those earnings were paid to Ejder Toprak. END TEXT.

122. Published by Aksam on Thursday, April 13:

TITLE: The New York Times reports, Turkish police capture

BEGIN TEXT: In an article in the U.S. New York Times by Craig Smith last year, it was claimed that Turkey has turned into a woman market after the USSR dissolved. The article entitled, "Is Turkey Happy to Become a Woman Market?" claimed that women from the former Soviet Republics were used as slaves in the sex trade.

This article in the Times was quoted by the Turkish media on June 28, 2005, and the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor ordered the police to crack down on the gangs. The police began work against prostitution networks. First they began to tap the phones of the networks and follow their leaders. The houses, clients and the women they used for prostitution were determined one by one. Following nine months' work, a raid called "Cat" netted the arrest of gang leader Ejder Toprak. Twenty-five people who were forcing foreign women into prostitution were detained. While the court put nine under arrest, it set the remaining 16 free to be tried on release.

Following the information obtained from Ejder Topak and other gang members and as a result of phone tapping and technical surveillance, last week a second operation was carried out. Twenty-three women, including famous models and singers, were detained. Up to four years' imprisonment was demanded against four who were forcing the "victims" into prostitution. Each suspect will be punished as many times as the number of their victims and thus Dincer D.'s sentence will be multiplied with 16, Suat Y.'s with 12 and Bulent T. with seven.

RUSSIA ASKS FOR HELP

The indictment claimed that an official from the Russian Federation Consulate in Istanbul went to the Foreigners' Police on February 3, 2006, and requested their citizen Irina Ryabchenko to be saved from the hands of a gang. Upon information that Irina might be in Mersin, the Mersin Police was called for help. Irina was saved from the gang with the efforts of the police.

SECRETARIES GREET THOSE WHO ARE TRAPPED

SIPDIS

In the indictment, it was explained in detail how these women were dragged into the trap. Some people, including gang leader Ejder Topak and his wife Oksana, brought women to Istanbul from Russia, Moldavia, Belarus and the Ukraine with various promises. They paid the travel expenses. Women who fall into the trap were met at the airport by women, who were called "secretaries," and who earlier were pulled into prostitution. After being taken from the airport, these women were taken to the gang's houses or hotels. Later these women were forced to sign a document confirming that they were in debt. Women who were isolated in a foreign country were forced into prostitution to pay their debt. Those who resist were subject to beating and torture. Those who oppose were sold to other gangs in Izmir, Mersin and other provinces in return for \$3000-6000 for the security of the gang. In order to enable these women to stay longer in Turkey, the gang altered their passport information.

UP TO 575 YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT

The Istanbul Police prepared the indictment against 25 suspects. The prostitution gang will soon be on trial at the Istanbul Heavy Penal Court Number 3. Leader Ejder Topak faces imprisonment term from 259 to 575 years and Murat Dogan from 80 to 207 years.

IRINA'S TRAGEDY

In the indictment, the story of Irina Ryabchenko, forced to be a sex slave, was related as, "Irina (23) was sent to Istanbul by an agency. She was met by a woman called Anya. She was taken to an apartment in Atakoy. Deniz B., who was at the house, said that they spent \$4000 to bring her to Istanbul and made her sign a document. He told her that in order to pay back her debt she had to be involved in prostitution. Irina abided by the demand. Despite the fact that she paid her debt, she could not get away from the gang. She ran away. Deniz B. captured her and sold her to Ejder Topak. Toprak locked her up in a house in Aksaray. Her telephone and passport were taken away from her. Topak and three others first beat her and later raped her for four days. Later she was sold for \$6000 to Kenan, known as "Apo," in Izmir. After a while Kenan sold her for \$6000 to a man called "Niyazi" in Mersin.

#### FEES FOR THE GIRLS

Women who are dragged into prostitution have been marketed either for the hour or the night for \$100 or \$200.

If the client agrees to the price, these women are taken from where they are kept and taken to the meeting place.

These women are not paid ahead of time. The money owed to them is registered in a book. Later Ejder Topak pays the women. END TEXT.

123. Reported by Hurriyet on Friday, April 14:

TITLE: Sermon on prostitution in Istanbul

BEGIN TEXT: Hurriyet quoted State Minister Mehmet Aydin, who is in charge of the Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet), as saying that they would stop uniform sermons valid for the entire province, and instead would come up with specially-tailored sermons for each province for Friday prayers.

Aydin explained that, for example, a Friday sermon in Antalya could be on tourism, in Diyarbakir on terrorism and honor killings, and in Istanbul on prostitution.

Aydin said that as a town receiving immigrants, Istanbul has been suffering serious problems concerning prostitution and theft. Aydin stressed that women from certain countries, in particular, were forcefully kept and dragged into prostitution and added, "It is a tragedy. There are responsibilities that lay on the Diyanet. For example, as it delivers sermons in Istanbul, it can refer to this tragedy. These sermons can be on various topics." END TEXT.

WILSON